

“WITHOUT CAREFULNESS”**NO. 1692**

**A SERMON
DELIVERED AT THE THURSDAY EVENING LECTURE,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“I would have you without carefulness.”
1 Corinthians 7:32.*

AT the time when Paul wrote these words he was giving judgment as to whether it was expedient for Christians in those days to marry. The question was whether they were likely to be better Christians married or unmarried. This was a question of much delicacy, and Paul answered it with remarkable discretion and fidelity. And in so doing he laid down a great general principle, which is of much more value to the church today than Paul's private opinion about the matter of marriage or non-marriage. Paul tells us that concerning virgins he had no commandment of the Lord, but gave his judgment as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. He did not speak in this case as under divine inspiration, but as an experienced and consecrated man giving his judgment for the good of others, and for the benefit of the great work so dear to him. In that capacity Paul's words are by no means to be despised. I would far rather follow the uninspired advice of Paul than that of any other man. In mental clearness none ever excelled that consecrated man. But he spoke under inspiration beyond all question when he gave this as his reason for desiring that they would remain unmarried—“I would have you without carefulness,” or as the Revised Version reads it, “I would have you to be free from cares.” This is the mind of the Holy Spirit as well as the mind of the apostle Paul. This is a text, not for Paul's time alone, but for our time, and for all time.

The general principle in our text I will endeavor to open up before you. We who have believed are the servants of Christ, and are no longer at our own disposal. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. If you look back in the chapter, at the twenty-third verse, you find a statement to that effect. Hence our business in life is to serve Him who has redeemed us. This one occupation should entirely absorb and engross us. Everything, therefore, which helps us better serve the Lord Jesus better is a good thing, but everything which hampers and hinders us in the main business of our life, though it may be good enough for others, is bad for us. The chief work of the Christian is to glorify God, and to this chief work everything must be subordinated. If a thing is lawful to me, and yet, while lawful, it hinders me in the service of God, it is not expedient, and therefore I am to renounce it. No man ever succeeds in anything who does not give himself wholly to it, it matters not what it is, concentration is essential to perfection in any pursuit. He who would be eminent in any one direction must forego a great many other things which are perfectly allowable. These he must renounce for the sake of his one objective. He will not succeed unless he sacrifices all other things for the one chief thing. So must it be with the Christian. The rule of his life is to be, “This I will not do, this I will not enjoy, this I will not allow to myself, because I could not serve God as well with it, and my business is to keep myself in the best possible form for doing my Master's work.” We are to labor as much as ever we can for our Lord, and all other results of life must be to us as chaff to the wheat.

It is with us, Paul tells us, as with a soldier. A soldier is a man who must not open shop, or become a banker or a farmer. He must not think of settling quietly in the town where for a while he is lodging. Why not? The reason is clear, even if there is no war at the present time, yet no man that wars entangles himself with the things of this life if he would please him who has called him to be a soldier. Soldiering requires the man to be altogether a soldier, and it cannot afford to let him be a tradesman or a farmer. He must not hamper himself with that which would hold him to the spot, and prevent his hastening to the field. The nation needs its army to be ready for any and every emergency, so that when the trumpet blows, the regiment marches, the troopship steams across the sea, and the foe is promptly confronted. It

is necessary that the soldier keep himself in marching condition, and the less baggage he has to carry the better. So it is with the Christian. He is to aim at a condition best adapted for his holy warfare. He is not to be satisfied when he has said to himself, “Is this right, or is this wrong?” He is to go further. I hope that many of us have long passed beyond that stage, for we have a judgment and discernment which tell us at once what is right and what is wrong, but we now ask a still higher question—“Will this help me to glorify God, or will it not?” This is the inquiry of the higher life, and a godly man is careful in the answering of it. The best thing is bad if it hinders our vocation. Though the garment were made of silk, bespangled with jewels, and adorned with golden thread, yet must we as racers lay it aside if it would entangle us in our running. Though the burden were a bag of pearls, and every pearl were a king’s ransom, yet if we are to run—and none can win but those that run—we must leave that bag of pearls in another’s keeping, for our business is with the crown before us. And we must lay aside every weight, and the vesture of sin which does so easily entangle us, that we may run with patience the race that is set before us.

At this time the apostle says to us—“I would have you without carefulness as to earthly things,” and this because he would have us full of carefulness as to heavenly things. He wants us to be free from cares, that all our thought, anxiety, meditation, suggestiveness, inventiveness, and burden-bearing may go towards the service of our divine Lord. We have only a certain measure of mind, and he wants all of it for the Lord Jesus, that we may walk worthy of our high calling. But towards other things he says, “I would have you without carefulness.”

How are we to be without carefulness? This must be the work of the Holy Spirit, for He is the Comforter, and the helper of our infirmities, but as far as we are to work with Him the question needs a careful reply. How are we to be without carefulness?

I. I answer, we may hopefully attempt this in the power of God, first, BY AVOIDING THOSE STATES WHICH INVOLVE CAREFULNESS. Mark well, it is not given to many to select their place in life. More or less it may be committed to us to turn to the right or to the left on certain occasions, but men and women are thrown into certain conditions in which it may be their duty to abide in their calling, though it may surround them with special difficulties. That calling may be one which ordinarily involves a vast amount of care and anxious thought, and yet they cannot get out of it. They ought not to leap the hedge which the Lord has placed along their way, for if they do they may fall into a ditch on the other side, and muddy their garments, and so make matters worse. By crying to God for help, and trusting in His sure word, they will be able to bear the burden which God has put upon them, and it is their wisdom to do so. Yet there are points in which we are allowed a choice about the state in which we would place ourselves, and here our text comes in as a rule of action.

Paul, in the case before us, is talking about *the marriage of Christians*, and he bids Christians, in the first place, not to marry, for he says, “I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”

Now, observe the condition of affairs which led Paul to give this advice. Times of great persecution were present. Christians were continually being dragged into court, or set before the lions in the amphitheater, or shut up in prison, or put to cruel deaths, in such circumstances few would desire to have families about them. The Christian man who had no wife or child could flee in a moment if it were right to flee. Or when he stood before the bar of Nero, he had not to think within himself, “If I die, I leave a wife and fatherless children.” When the single man put on his hat, he housed all his family, and thus he could move this way or that way to preach the gospel, or to escape from persecution, and his moving was no great affair such as would be involved in transporting a family from land to land. Paul wished the church to be like an army which is not encumbered with baggage. The circumstances of the time demanded that they should be unencumbered, like troops upon forced marches. Paul himself carried all his property in a little bit of canvas, and it consisted of half a dozen needles and a reel of thread, with which he made tents wherever he went. He was thus without carefulness. In those hard and desperate times it was the best possible thing that a man could do, or a woman either, to remain single. They were thus in the best condition for flight, or suffering, or service, or death. It was not a time in which they could settle down, and engage in trade or agriculture, and Paul therefore gives as a recommendation that they had better not

then be married. If we get into such times again we will give the same advice, but we are not certain that we should speak thus today, as a general rule. The circumstances are decidedly different, and we are to follow the great principle rather than the particular instance. I have known brethren who I am sure had a great deal more care before they were married than ever they had afterwards. Poor things that they were, they needed somebody to look after them. I have known cases in which women have had great care and burden in their single state, and have found rest in the house of a husband and it has been upon the whole the best for them in the truest sense. They served God better, and were freer from carefulness in the married state. That is the rule to judge by. But numbers of you never judge at all in this way. Many men and women rush into marriage when they know that it must involve them in all sorts of care and trouble, and deprive them of the possibility of doing anything in the Master's service. It is not for me to offer advice, for it is useless. I am often asked for advice, but I generally find that people have made up their minds long before they come to their minister, and only want him to sanction what they have already settled, and therefore I very seldom give any counsel. Still, I shall lay down the general principle, which every Christian man and woman must accept—"I would have you to be free from cares," You are to put this to the front, that you are not your own, you are bought with a price, and about this matter of marriage, as well as everything else, you are to consult the will of your Lord and Master, and you are to put this as the question, "Shall I glorify God better married or unmarried? May I hope that I shall not so greatly increase my carefulness as to distract myself from serving my Lord? There is something to be said on each side, but may I hope that the balance may be struck so that I shall really be the better servant of Christ in the marriage state? If so, I may enter upon it, but if not, I am not to gratify myself at my Savior's expense. I may not marry if I should then cease to be as good a servant of Christ as I am now." None of you are too good servants of Christ; I have never met with any that were. We cannot afford to lose anything which we have already, for we are not even now all that we ought to be. No, we must give ourselves whole-heartedly to Christ, and remember the admonition of the text, "I would have you without carefulness."

We have got over that somewhat difficult part of our road which is concerned with marriage. We come to another which is very plain, but needs to be spoken of, namely, the matter of *increased worldly business*. Some forget this advice of the apostle altogether, regarding it as a check upon enterprise; such persons take up a number of businesses, and consequently increase their cares indefinitely. Now, if you can serve God better by having a dozen shops, have a dozen, but I have known persons whom God blessed in one shop, and they lost the blessing when they felt they needed to open two or three. In a moderate business, they obtained a livelihood and all that they could want, and they were able to get out to the house of God, and to have spare hours for the service of God in the Sunday school, and in preaching, or other forms of Christian service. Thus they were in an enviable position for usefulness, and ought to have been pillars in the house of the Lord. But they were not content with so favored a state. Nothing would do for them but they must have shop number two—three—four, and then, of course, they were too busy to go out on week evenings, to lectures, classes, or prayer meetings. When invited to take their part in the Lord's work, they replied—"You see, I cannot get out; you must excuse me, I am so tired." Just so. Of course you must look after business now that you are so immersed in it, but how did you come to get into such a state of bondage that you cannot get out to the worship or service of God? Is not your excessive toil your own fault? If you have brought yourself into such a condition that you cannot give to God His due, is it an excuse for your not being able to do it? The disability is entirely of your own creation, how can it excuse you? If this were the time, I could mention persons who were members of this church whose departure from the way of righteousness was owing to a grasping spirit, and that grasping spirit has in certain cases led to a foolish rush after riches, which has ended in poverty and discredit. They had as much as they could have managed, but they wanted more, and more, and more, and to get more they ventured upon ways and methods which were questionable. By and by the means of grace were neglected because they must attend to business. Very soon, for the same reason, they could not get up on Sunday morning, they were so tired, they did not get the shop shut till twelve, and then there was clearing up till half-past one, so they could not get out on a Sunday morning. Worse than that, after a while, they just looked over the ledger a little on Sunday afternoon. Soon the very vitals of godliness were gone, and not long after that, the name to live went also, for the power of godliness had entire-

ly departed from them. “I would have you without carefulness,” and therefore to the most enterprising brother I would say—Brother, do not fill your pocket at the expense of your soul. Do what is best for the best part of you and that best part of yourself is the soul which deals with God and eternity. God can prosper you and make you exceedingly happy with a more manageable business, and He can make you miserable if you willfully increase your cares. The Lord Jesus said, “A man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.” Therefore, as I would have you without carefulness, look well, my dear friend, before you launch out into that new business, or take that off-hand farm, or enter upon that speculative operation. Do not wade into risks so deep that you will be drowned in anxiety. Remember how Napoleon tried to do too much, and did it, and did for himself. Men of large capacity may rule an empire, and yet serve the Lord admirably, but the most of us had better be satisfied with a smaller sphere. At any rate, let us not heap up such a load of our own that we shall not be able to bear the burden which our Master would have us carry for His love’s sake. Do not look so cross, good friend, or I shall think that my advice is more necessary to you than it is pleasing. The day may come when this warning will be better understood by you than at this moment.

Some Christian men need to have a touch on the elbow about *public engagements*. For my part, I believe that everything which concerns a man concerns a Christian, and that God never wished His servants to leave the government of this realm to all the place-hunters and unprincipled self-seekers who look for a seat in Parliament. Christian men ought to see to it that right is promoted and justice done. To abandon law-making to the worst of men would be infamous. So with everything which concerns the public welfare, I believe that we are to turn the scale for truth and righteousness, and are not to let the devil have his way, and give corruption and oppression the run of all the parishes in England. But there is a limit to a man’s acceptance of public office, and let that limit be watched carefully by all the Lord’s children. Let the rule be, first our God and then our fellow men. What if I am a patriot, yet first of all the New Jerusalem is the place of my citizenship. I am a pilgrim and a stranger, and even though I seek the good of these aliens among whom I dwell, I must still keep my eye upon my own native country, towards which I am speeding. A man must not be doing twenty things in public life, and neglecting the calls of the Lord Christ. If he does this he will have care upon care, and will weary and trouble himself with things of no profit, and he will not care for the things of God as he should. Brethren, “I would have you without carefulness,” you are the servants of God; do not make yourselves the slaves of men.

Here I wish to say another word to some whose *occupations prevent their attendance at the house of God*. I am not going to censure or judge any, but I will say this, whenever I hear of a young man who has an occupation with a moderate salary, who is able to get out to worship, and has the whole Sabbath-day to himself, so that he can help in the Sunday school, and perhaps in some week-evening engagements, if I hear that he is offered twice as much money in a place where he must be shut out from worship and service, I hope he will look long before he makes the bargain. If part of the Sabbath must go, and all weeknight privileges must go, I would in most cases say, “My brother, forego the temporal advantage for the sake of the spiritual.” There may be exceptions to rules, and I lay down nothing as a hard and fast rule, but still let this be the general guide in such matters—“I would have you without carefulness.” If it is so that he who has less has less care, let me have less. He who has a moderate income, with small responsibility, is a richer man than he who has twice as much, with twice as much responsibility, and only half as much opportunity of serving his God. For you, Christians, the best place you can have is where you can do most for Jesus, and the worst place you can have is where you are denied Christian privileges. No amount of salary can make up to you the disadvantage of being kept from the assemblies of the saints, or can make up to your soul the loss sustained by excessive labor in the house of bondage. “I would have you without carefulness.”

This bears very hard upon all those *forms of speculation* of which some men are so fond. A man says, “I believe that I can get rich in a hurry by a certain venture.” Do not touch it. You will have no end of care, and it may bring absolute poverty upon you. You have heard of the man who hurried to be rich and was *not* innocent. I am afraid that few are long innocent who hasten to be rich. They clutch at everything on a sudden, and they are apt to include in that clutch a few things which do not belong to them. What devouring care must prey upon those whose trade is as risky as a throw of the dice? When business is mere gambling it ceases to be legitimate. Let speculators take heed of those dangers which neces-

sarily attend all games of chance. I believe that every form of gambling, though it may take a business shape, tends more or less to harden the heart. As for the naked form of play, which risks upon the roll of a ball, it is murder to all the finer feelings of the heart. Nobody but gamblers could have cast the dice, all blood bespattered, at the foot of the cross of our Redeemer. Gambling brings men into a state of heart worse than almost any other form of sin. When a man is willing to risk practically his all on the mere toss of a halfpenny whether goods shall go up or down, he is usually a bad man, and if he is not, he will be so before long, for that kind of thing does serious mischief to the tenderest tissues of the heart. If any Christian man attempts it, what a state of mind will he soon know! Can he pray? Can he meditate? Can he commune with the Lord Jesus? Can he be without carefulness? Where can his trust be? Where his faith in God? When he has practically committed his fortunes to the devil, how can he confide in his God? Gambling and prayer can never go together except in the case of the reprobate. I suppose they are profane enough to unite the two, but therein they blaspheme heaven most detestably. Brethren, abstain from those things which inevitably create undue excitement, anxiety, and suspense. I speak as unto wise men, judge you what I say, I would have you without carefulness, and therefore I would have you avoid those states which involve it.

I. Secondly, BY KEEPING AWAY FROM THOSE OBJECTS OF PURSUIT WHICH WOULD NATURALLY FOSTER IT, I would have you without carefulness.

When a man makes the gaining of riches the first thing in life, he cannot be without carefulness. Where his treasure is there will his heart be also. There is the carefulness to get, the carefulness to hold, the carefulness to place out at interest, the carefulness to collect dues, and so forth. Yes, and this may be the case even with poor people, who may be as full of greedy care as the millionaire. Thrift is commendable, but covetousness is detestable. Men not only lay by for a rainy day, which is well, but they make saving the main object of their lean and hungry lives, and God’s glory and man’s needs are alike forgotten. Now, if you live for anything but God—especially if you live to hoard up, with the determination that somehow or other you will be immensely rich, you *must* be full of carefulness. It cannot be helped.

Suppose that you are of a nobler spirit, and you live with the view of gaining honor among men, you will with equal certainty be full of cares. I hope you will not say, “I must be honored. I must have my neighbors think well of me, and I will make a slave, or a fool, or a hypocrite of myself to please them.” This resolve is detestable, and if you go into that line you will not be without carefulness, I can tell you, and with all your carefulness you will never succeed. To please everybody is as impossible as to make ice and bake bread at the same moment in one oven. Give up the wretched attempt. Be a man, and be not a mere man-pleaser. How blessedly easy I feel in my work for God! But I owe that ease to the fact that I have no one to please but my Lord. When I preach, the last thing that ever occurs to me is to ask myself whether any of you will like it or not. It is no wish of mine to give offense, but it has never occurred to me to think whether you will be offended or not. I do not think you would respect me if I made my preaching an occasion for seeking to please you. If it pleases God it will please you, if you are right, and if you are wrong, and it does not please you, well, it never ought to please you. This enables a preacher to give his entire mind to his subject. The opposite feeling would distract him and make him live the life of a toad under a harrow. Go into life in just that kind of spirit. Do everything to please your fellow man if it will do him real good. Never be ungenerous, nor unkind, nor uncourteous, but never live to please the world. No slave is as slavish as the wretch who draws his breath from other people’s nostrils, and can only live if he is approved by his neighbors. Scorn such servitude. I would have you without carefulness, and you cannot be without carefulness if you seek to please men.

Many persons are so ambitious to be respectable that they never will be without carefulness. They have a pound coming in but they spend a guinea to be respectable, and so they cannot be without carefulness. I charge you do not care about being what is known in the world as “respectable.” Be Christians, whether people respect you or not. That littleness which stamps out everything that is good or brave, in order to put a man into the fashion, is to be the object of our supreme contempt. Do right. Serve God. Live for heaven. Care little about man’s esteem. Abhor the pride of life. Live above the world, or you will be eaten up with carefulness, it cannot be helped.

Some persons have a favorite objective in life—not God, but an earthly thing, and these cannot be without carefulness. Dear mother, love your children by all manner of means, but if that little one has become an idol, I am sure you cannot be without carefulness. I have known mothers kill their children because they did not want them to die. That is to say, they never let the wind blow on them, they kept them in a hat box, screened the blessed air of heaven from them, and so brought them up that they became weak and sickly, thanks to their mothers’ indulgent care. Lots of children have suffered a martyrdom from too much nursing, and excessive carefulness has created cause for care. If it is not a child, if it is anything else that becomes the pet and hobby of life, you will soon find that you have plenty of care about it. A horse, a dog, a flower, a painting, may entangle men and women in nets of care. I have seen it and lamented it. The more objects you set your heart upon, the more thorns there are to tear your peace of mind into shreds. I know people, who dread every puff of wind, and every shower of rain, because a yacht might be tossed about, or a garden-party spoiled, such trifles sensible people may be troubled about. “What are we to do, then?” asks one. Why, live for God, live wholly for God. Put everything else into its true place. Children, business, every favorite pursuit—leave them in the hands of God, for until you do this you will be cankered with carefulness of one kind or another, and be incapacitated for the joyful service of the Lord your God.

Thus I have given you two helpful rules, first, avoid the states which involve carefulness, and secondly, avoid the pursuits which involve carefulness. May the Spirit of God help you to carry them out.

III. But now, thirdly, and better still, I would have you without carefulness **BY EXERCISING A CHILD-LIKE FAITH IN THE EVER-BLESSED GOD.**

He sends you troubles and trials, but be without carefulness, first, *by never trying to anticipate them.* Never meet them half-way. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Oh, the strength it gives a man when he learns to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”! It would be a poor prayer if a man should cry, “Lord, give me a guarantee of my bread for six months.” No, no, the Lord never taught us to ask for that. That forestalling of the demands of the future finds no petition written for it. Our Lord would have us cultivate the feeling that whatever the necessity of the day, whatever the requirement of the day, whatever the trial of the day, we shall take it to God as it comes, and He will then and there meet the case. Commit your way unto the Lord, and then be without carefulness.

I will now tell you something better still. If you can manage to live by the five minutes, that is better than living by the day. I am not tonight, at twenty minutes past eight o’clock, allowed to fret myself about what is likely to happen at ten. I have grace at this time for the present moment, but not for ten o’clock. Why, therefore, should I hurry towards a trouble for which I am not yet prepared? Leave ten o’clock worries till ten o’clock comes. The hour that brings the trial will bring the strength. The hour that tests you, will find God ready at your hand to help you. Live by the day, yes, live by the hour.

The next thing is, if you would be without carefulness, *be quite content with the Lord’s will.* Suppose you do not prosper in business as you would like, be content not to do so. Do your best, and leave your prospering in the hands of God. Suppose that after consulting a physician you find that your complaint is not removed? Duly follow all right and wise prescriptions and directions, and then leave your health with God. With regard to those you love, when you have prayed for their restoration and they are not restored, then say still, “Not as I will, but as You will.” If you cannot suit your purse to your wishes, bring your wishes to your purse. Higher still, if God does not give you all your desires do the other thing—submit all your desires to God. When your desires and God’s decrees agree, all will be well. Whether God gives you your wish or you give up your wish, will make no notable difference. You will be equally happy so long as your will is God’s will, and God’s will is your will. And I believe—and I speak experientially—that, when you are racked with pain, if God teaches you to submit—and it is often a hard lesson—you can suffer in every limb, and yet sing in your inmost soul. This is the way to live without carefulness—first, not to meet trouble before it comes, and next, when it does come, to be content, saying, “It is the Lord: let Him do what seems Him good.”

The next thing is to *be quite sure about the love of God.* He cannot make a mistake, and He cannot fail His people. If the worst thing, as it seems to us, should happen, it must be the right thing, because God has sent it. Be sure also that when our needs come, God’s supplies will come too. The Lord is bound by His own promise to provide for all the real necessities of those who trust in Him. Oh, that we

did thoroughly know God, and did fully believe in Him!—then would our peace be as a river, and our joy like that of birds when the sun is rising. Then should we sing—

*“I have no cares, O blessed Lord,
For all my cares are Yours;
I live in triumph, too, for You
Have made Your triumphs mine.”*

Another sweet thing would help us to be without care, and that is, fully to *believe in the power of prayer*, and in the fact that God does actually answer it. God will grant His children’s desires, and answer their prayers. We constantly meet with instances in which God does most manifestly come to the help of those that walk before Him aright. I personally met this week with a notable case. A dear sister is left a widow, with three children. She wonders what she shall do for the morning’s bread. There is none in the house. She thinks to herself that she formerly kept shop, and that she has a few goods left, a little stained and soiled, but still saleable at a price. She goes into her room, and prays God in her agony of soul to direct her to a customer. To her delight a person asks her whether she kept shop once, at such and such a road. Yes, she is the individual. Such goods as she used to buy at the shop, this person cannot get anywhere else, and she much needs them. Could she tell her where she could get the like? Yes, these are the very goods that she had hoped to sell, and though a little soiled and stained, the inquirer is glad to have them. The very person who wants them has come to buy them before she has crossed the threshold to seek a customer, and she is amazed at the goodness of the Lord. This honest woman is told that it was a mere coincidence, she says that she knows nothing about coincidences, but she blesses the Lord that her needs were supplied for the time, and she means to trust Him for the future. I did not attempt to alter her resolution to rely in the future upon God in time of trouble; on the contrary, I cheered her in it, for I would have her without carefulness. When my grandfather was a young man, before my days, he had a great family and a small income. He had a cow that he kept for his children, and he went to fetch it up from the meadow, and when it was near the house it was taken with “the staggers,” and died. My grandmother said, “There, James, what shall we do now through the winter without the cow?” He replied, “My dear, God has provided for us, and He always will, though I do not know how.” And with a heavy heart he went to pray and lay his trouble before the Lord. I have heard the dear old man tell how that morning brought a post-letter, with nine pence to pay, and grandmother said, “Troubles never come alone. Here is nine pence to pay for this letter. Shall we take it in?” But when she did take it in, it brought twenty pounds from a society in London, to which the good man had never applied. He could not make out how they knew of him at all, but the Lord knew, and led them to send the money on the day of his greatest need. These stories are a few out of many that are in my wallet, instances which I have gathered in my pilgrimage. I have seen enough, in my own lifetime, to fill a volume concerning the goodness of the Lord in answer to His children’s prayers. When you are as sure that God answers prayer as I am sure of it, then you will realize the meaning of the text, “I would have you without carefulness.”

Some people of my acquaintance are full of carefulness. I know a maiden lady who possesses what many poor people would think to be wealth. She has a fixed, regular, and ample income, but she will not spend it because she must first save a certain sum. At first her ambition was to have enough in hand to bury her. Why, she has enough already to bury twenty of her, but she keeps on nipping and scraping still, and whenever you meet her she talks of how little she eats, and how dear everything is. She might live in plenty, and have something for the cause of God, but instead of that she has always an awful story about her expenses. I believe that if she were made into the Empress of China, she would be afraid that there would not be enough tea grown in China for her to drink. She is of such a spirit that she is a burden to herself, and a plague to all who are about her. When you once give way to grumbling and grasping, then you are careful, and careful, and careful, till you become good for nothing in the service of God. Do, I pray you brothers and sisters, try to get rid of this disease, for your fretful carefulness will make you a misery to yourself and to your friends. It will destroy your power to do good, and it will cut off your communion with God, for if you do not trust God, God will not walk with you. I do not care to have a man of my acquaintance who does not believe in me. I cannot bear him if he is always mistrusting me. And so it is with God. He will not commune with you or smile upon you, if you will not trust Him, but if you will leave everything with Him and believe that your heavenly Father knows best, you

shall have many a kind word from His lips, and you shall find what a good, gracious, loving Father He is. Why, you and I ought to be as happy as the birds of the air, and as merry as crickets on the hearth, for what a God we have, which will take care of us both in this life and in the life to come! All things are ours—the gifts of God—the purchase of a Savior’s love. Even our troubles are the best troubles in the world. Our cross is a heavy one, but it is the best cross for us. Each man has the cross which best fits him. You could not carry mine, and I could not carry yours half as well as my own. Despite your peculiar trials, you are a happy and a favored man, and God has dealt infinitely better with you than you ever deserved or could have expected. Praise Him, then, and bless His name. Get out of the fidgets, brother, if you can. Get out of the worries, my dear sister. You are a good, dear housewife, and your husband says if he could get a little of the Mary into you, and a little of the Martha out of you, you would be a perfect wife. Is not this a practical suggestion? Let us see whether we cannot, each one, be improved by trying to be without carefulness.

Let us each one give all our thought and care to this one object—how can I please God? How can I avoid sin? How can I be holy? How can I win sinners to Christ? How can I comfort my fellow Christians? How, in a word, can I live as Christ would have lived? You never find Jesus worrying. If He weeps, it is for the souls of men; if He suffers, it is to redeem men from going down to the pit; and if He dies of a broken heart, it is a broken heart about the sins of others. As for Himself, what a delicious carelessness of holy confidence there was about Him! He went on board ship, and He knew that a storm would come, a storm that would try the poor little boat, but He lay down and slept. The disciples are all in a worry. They cry, “Master, we perish!” And where was their Master? Asleep! You have often thought of the sleep of the Savior, and almost deemed Him negligent. Now, think of the grand confidence of the Savior in being able to sleep in a storm. If His disciples had been asleep too, it would have been the best thing they could have done, for they could not manage the winds or the waves. If they had possessed the moral dignity which ennobled their Lord, and had been able to go down into the back part of the boat and to go to sleep with Him, they would have awoken up in the morning in calm. The best thing you, my dear brothers and sisters, can do in a great trouble may be to remember that text, “So He gives His beloved sleep.” Pray over your difficulty, and then go to sleep, and wake up and find it all over, for the Lord has worked a great deliverance for you. I knew one well who was always in trouble about how he should die. Dear good man, he refused to be comforted, but was often troubled about the horrors of the departing hour, until one night he went to bed, shut his eyes on earth, and opened them in glory. He never knew that he was away from earth till he knew that he was in heaven, for he died in his sleep, and so it turned out that he had been worrying himself about nothing. Leave everything with God. If I can trust my *soul* with Him, I am sure I can trust my body with Him. If I can trust my eternal condition with Him, cannot I trust Him with a matter of a five-pound note? What, rest on Christ for glory, and not rest on Christ for bread! Come, come, the Lord get you out of that low, unbelieving state. I am nearly at the close, and so I press upon you my text. Like Paul, “I would have you without carefulness.” May you be so through the power of the gracious God who taught the apostle Peter to say in the Spirit, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Amen.

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